



Joint Report of the Cabinet Members for Service Transformation and Care Services

Special Cabinet – 29 September 2022

Housing Support Programme Strategy 2022-2026

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| Purpose: | To seek approval for the Housing Support Programme Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2026 |
| Policy Framework: | Housing Support Grant Guidance 2020 (Updated April 2021) Housing (Wales) Act 2014 Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Welsh Government's Strategy for Ending Homelessness 2018 and Ending Homelessness in Wales: A high level action plan 2021-2026 |
| Consultation: | Access to Services, Finance, Legal, Housing and Partner Organisations. |
| Recommendation(s): | It is recommended that Cabinet: 1) Approve the Housing Support Programme Strategy and Action Plan |
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| Finance Officer: | Chris Davies |
| Legal Officer: | Debbie Smith |
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Housing Support Programme Strategy fulfils the requirement described in the Housing Support Grant guidance published in March 2020 (updated in April 2021) to develop a strategic plan for the whole housing system.

- 1.2 The Housing Support Programme Strategy is a single strategy which incorporates the reviewed and updated 2018-2022 Homelessness Strategy produced as of part the local authority's statutory duty under Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, and the strategic plans for use of the Housing Support Grant (a combination of three existing grants Supporting People Programme Grant, Homeless Prevention Grant and Rent Smart Wales Enforcement Grant).
- 1.3 This Strategy and accompanying action plan set out the single, strategic direction of the local authority for homelessness prevention and housing related support services for the next four years (2022 – 2026). It sets out the key priorities for the local authority and its partners based on findings from a comprehensive needs assessment and stakeholder engagement.

2. Vision And Principles

2.1 Vision

Swansea's overall vision for homelessness prevention and housing support services is: "To work in partnership to ensure every person has access to good quality advice, accommodation and support at the earliest possible opportunity so that homelessness is rare, brief, and unrepeatable."

2.2 Objectives

The Housing Support Programme Strategy is intended to increase the ability of the Council and its partners to prevent homelessness wherever possible. Prevention through early identification and intervention, as well as equitable and easy access to services, will reduce homelessness. Where it cannot be prevented, the Strategy aims to minimise the distress of the experience through rapid and robust service responses. This will be achieved through adoption of the following five objectives:

Objective 1: Ensuring service users are at the centre of service delivery

Objective 2: Prioritising early intervention and prevention of homelessness

Objective 3: Ensuring suitable accommodation is available for people who are or may become homeless

Objective 4: Ensuring appropriate support is available for people who are or may become homeless

Objective 5: Providing robust responses to support rough sleepers and eliminating the need for individuals to sleep rough

2.3 Key Principles

In order to successfully deliver the vision and objectives this strategy has adopted the following key principles from the Homelessness Strategy :

- Place prevention at the heart of services
- Safeguard people from harm
- Ensure equality of access to services and promote social inclusion and community cohesion
- Maximise the resources available to deal with homelessness
- Encourage and promote local partnership and regional working, where appropriate, in order to make the best use of resources and promote the ethos that homelessness is everyone's business

3. Needs Assessment

- 3.1 A comprehensive needs assessment has taken place to inform the development of the Strategy and Action Plan. This has included a range of methods and data including;
- Population Needs Assessment
 - Homelessness Review
 - Support Needs Data Review
 - Housing Support Grant Contract Monitoring
 - Housing Support Grant Outcomes Framework
 - Data and analysis from Commissioning Reviews
 - Market Stability Reports
 - Strategic and Operational meetings
 - Service area monitoring frameworks which capture needs and demand i.e VAWDASV, Mental Health
 - Client and Stakeholder Surveys (easy read version made available)
 - Client and Stakeholder consultation
 - Systems thinking review of temporary supported accommodation pathway

Key findings from the needs assessment and the service response is described within the Strategy and accompanying Action Plan.

4. Stakeholder Engagement

- 4.1 As part of the strategy development a range of different mechanisms have been utilised to provide opportunities for stakeholders to influence the future development of homelessness and support services. The different methods of engagement and collaboration have included client and stakeholder surveys, individual meetings with strategic leads, a stakeholder collaborative Forum, and consultation with over 40 individuals with lived experience.

5. Partnership Working

- 5.1 Partnership working is fundamental to achieving the effective delivery of the Strategy. Many people have multiple needs that extend beyond the basic need for a home. It is not possible for the Council to meet those needs in isolation. Working in partnership has been an essential element

to develop solutions to effectively prevent homelessness and offer sustainable housing solutions.

- 5.2 Local and Regional partnership working arrangements with the voluntary sector, support providers, Registered Social Landlords, the Health Board, Welsh Government and other Council Services are crucial in ensuring that the challenges of delivering the Strategy can be met.

6. Strategic Priorities

- 6.1 The development of the following strategic priorities for homelessness prevention and housing-related support over the next four years have been identified following a comprehensive needs assessment, a homelessness review and stakeholder engagement. (Not listed in any priority order).

- Strengthen and increase services in place to prevent homelessness
- Ensuring appropriate support is available at the right time for people who are at risk or are experiencing homelessness
- To adopt a rapid rehousing approach
- Continue to develop and improve partnership working with key stakeholders to ensure a joined-up approach to homelessness prevention
- Work in partnership to strengthen support provision for people with complex needs, including mental health, learning disability, substance misuse and VAWDASV
- Continue to increase the supply of suitable and affordable accommodation
- Work with service users and stakeholders to introduce regular mechanisms for engagement and co-production to inform service development and improvement
- Strengthen support and accommodation provision for young people
- Provide robust responses to support rough sleepers and eliminate the need for individuals to sleep rough

7. Action Plan

- 7.1 A detailed series of actions aligned to the Strategic Priorities have developed. The full action plan is attached in appendix 1.

8. Integrated Impact Assessment Implications

- 8.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage
 - Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
 - Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
 - Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 8.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.
- 8.3 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.
- 8.4 An IIA Screening Form has been completed with the agreed outcome that a full IIA report was not required. It is envisaged that the impact of the implementation of the Strategy will result in improved services and be wholly positive for individuals experiencing homelessness both now and in the future.

The Strategy will continue to engage with all relevant stakeholders during the implementation of the action plan and ensure that coproduction principles are at the heart of decision making.

The Strategy encompasses the Welsh Government homelessness strategy key priorities for tackling homelessness. The Strategy states that homelessness cannot be prevented by housing alone and that all public services have a role to play working together to prevent homelessness and where it cannot be prevented ensure it is rare, brief and unrepeatable, emphasising the importance of partnership working

Items in the action plan may require further screening or a full IIA where they result in the implementation of change to services commissioned or to the way services are provided or the type of accommodation provided.

- Please refer to Appendix 2 Integrated Impact Assessment Screening Form as a background paper

9. Financial Implications

- 9.1 The Strategy and Action Plan will be delivered through existing Homelessness and Housing Support Grant budgets

10. Legal Implications

- 10.1 The Local Authority has a statutory duty towards people who are homeless under Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. The strategy will assist the local authority to discharge this duty. There are no other legal implications associated with this report.

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

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| Appendix 1 | Housing Support Programme Strategy |
| Appendix 2 | Action Plan |
| Appendix 3 | Integrated Impact Assessment Form |